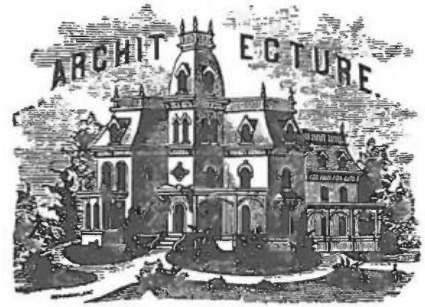


A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine



William R. Miller



Raymond J. Mayo

Miller and Mayo

When the partnership of William R. Miller (1866-1929) and Raymond J. Mayo (1878-1966) was formed in early 1907, the new firm was able to build on the state-wide reputation acquired by Miller during ten years of independent practice.¹ Although located in Lewiston, William Miller had designed projects all over the state, specializing in public buildings. During their first year as partners, Miller and Mayo worked in such diverse locations as Van Buren, Mexico, Dexter, Newport, Wilton, Island Falls, Benton, and Harpswell. Within a year the partnership moved to Portland. The architects continued, however, to devote considerable time to commissions in small towns throughout Maine.²

During the years 1908 and 1909 Miller and Mayo were occupied by relatively modest-sized projects such as the City National Bank in Belfast, the Rangeley Tavern Hotel in Rangeley, and the Amos Gerald House in Fairfield. The latter, built in 1909 for the noted streetcar entrepreneur, is a concrete block structure designed in the form of a castle with crenelated parapets and corbelling (Figure 1). Attached to the

front is a circular tower and porch with a third story observation post, all suggesting a medieval watch-tower. This fanciful house, located on a conventional residential street, is in keeping with the exotic tastes of both client and architect, who had earlier collaborated on the Gerald Hotel in Fairfield of 1899-1900 and Casco Castle in South Freeport of 1902.

In 1909 Boston architect G. Henri Desmond designed two important buildings in Portland on adjoining lots, the offices of the Fidelity Trust Company, the city's first skyscraper, and the Portland Theater.³ The distinctive stylized cast stone ornament on these two buildings was unusual for Maine and apparently profoundly influenced Miller and Mayo's work. This influence is suggested by several important projects, such as the Emery Department Store in Waterville of 1913 (Figure 2), the Elm Street Theater in Portland of 1916, and the Central Fire Station of 1923-24, also in Portland. Moreover, elements of the Lewiston Memorial Armory of 1922 and the Cyr Block in Waterville of 1923 were directly modeled on the Fidelity Building.

Desmond's impact on Miller and Mayo is, however, a rather problematical issue, for the two firms actually

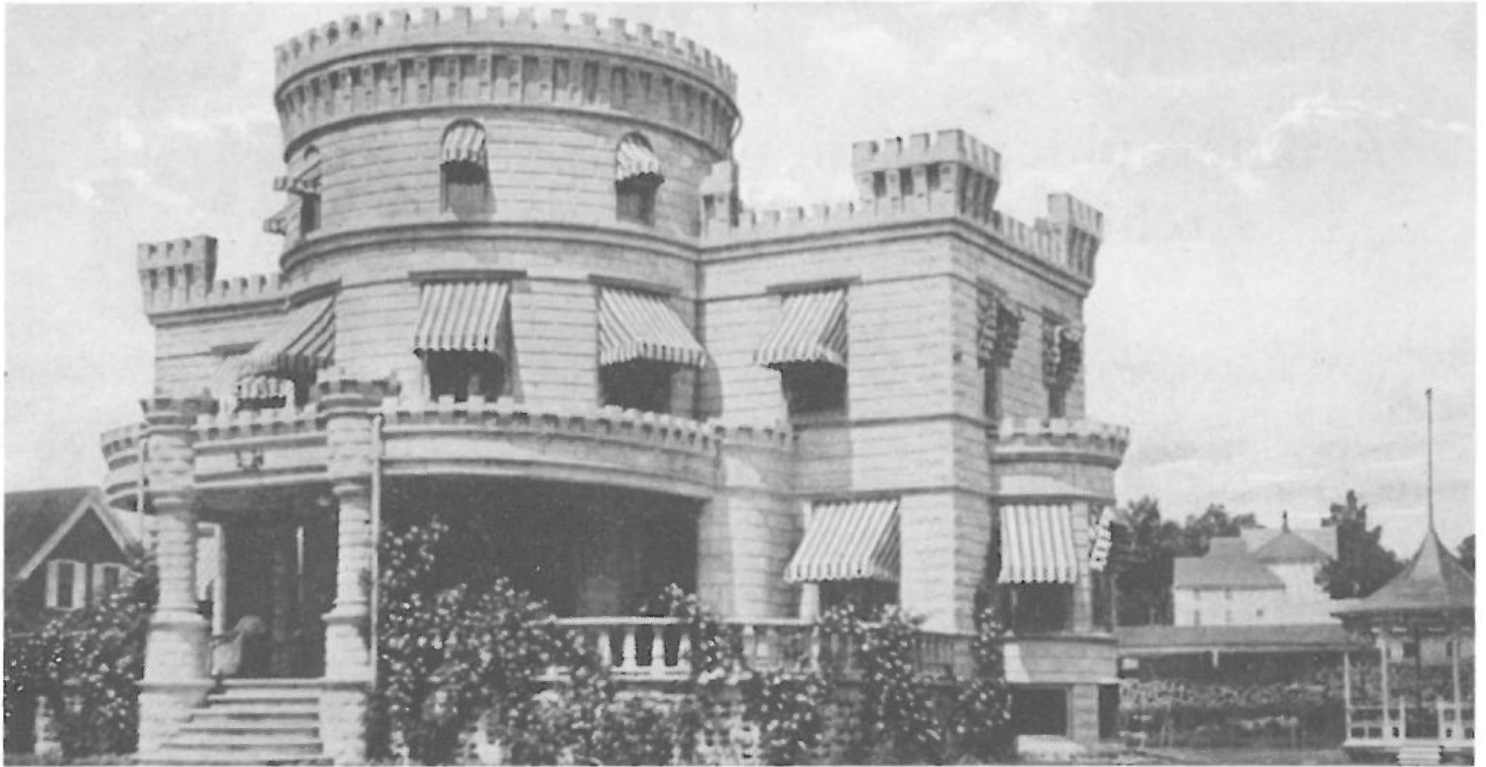


Figure 1. Amos Gerald House, Fairfield, c. 1910 view (MHPC).

collaborated on at least three projects. These were the Portland High School of 1918, the Taylor Farms Central Camp building in Belgrade of 1920, and the Lafayette Hotel Annex in Portland of 1920-21. Thus, there may have been connections between the Boston and Portland architects that extend beyond our present knowledge of their formal collaborations.⁴

The Desmond influence is somewhat evident in one of Miller and Mayo's most unusual early projects, the Maine Supply Company Building, constructed during the winter of 1910-11 (Figure 3). Located in the densely urban area of lower Lisbon Street in Lewiston, this little-known early automobile garage features a boldly articulated facade formed around a massive Palladian window motif. Both the scale and the design of the brackets and keystone in the Palladian motif betray a similarity to Desmond's work, although the bold use of the Palladian theme conforms with William R. Miller's own long-standing approach to design. The Maine Supply Company sold farming machinery, which was displayed on the upper two floors above office space on the second floor. The ground floor was reserved for automobiles, which could pass two abreast through the central entrance. To the left was a display window and to the right were the manager's office and a waiting room.⁵

Miller and Mayo's most visible early Portland works are the Stateway Apartments of 1913-14 and the Marlborough Apartments of 1914. The Stateway, for many years the largest apartment complex in the city, is H-shaped with the light court in the front also



Figure 2. Emery Department Store, Waterville, 1913 view (Courtesy Maine State Museum).

serving as an entryway with a large decorative free-standing arch (since altered). Each floor has bow windows and, on the upper levels, a recessed porch. In this way the architects successfully handled the difficult problem of obtaining sufficient light and ventilation in a large apartment building.

Schools were a source of numerous commissions for the firm. Some of their work in this area reflected prevalent thinking in school design, which called for rectangular two story buildings with flat roofs, large windows, and fire-resistant building materials. The firm's Union School in Biddeford of 1912, High and Grammar School in Dixfield of 1915, and High School in Eastport of 1916 typified this trend. Although constructed of wood, the most interesting examples from the aspect of exterior design were the similarly styled Freeport High School of 1917-18, the Cottage Farm School in Cape Elizabeth of 1920 and the Lincoln School in South Portland of 1925-26. All three structures, of which only the Lincoln School survives (Figure 4), exhibited a graceful attenuated use of Georgian Revival style trim, particularly in the tripartite stairhall fenestration of the two entrance pavilions.

At the same time there was a persistent tendency on the part of Miller and Mayo to produce structures which reflected traditional, even old-fashioned approaches to school design. The Nasson Institute in Springvale of 1912, for example, featured a steeply pitched hip roof, three large hipped roof dormers, a bell tower, and an arcaded entrance porch. Clearly, many building committees in small towns felt more

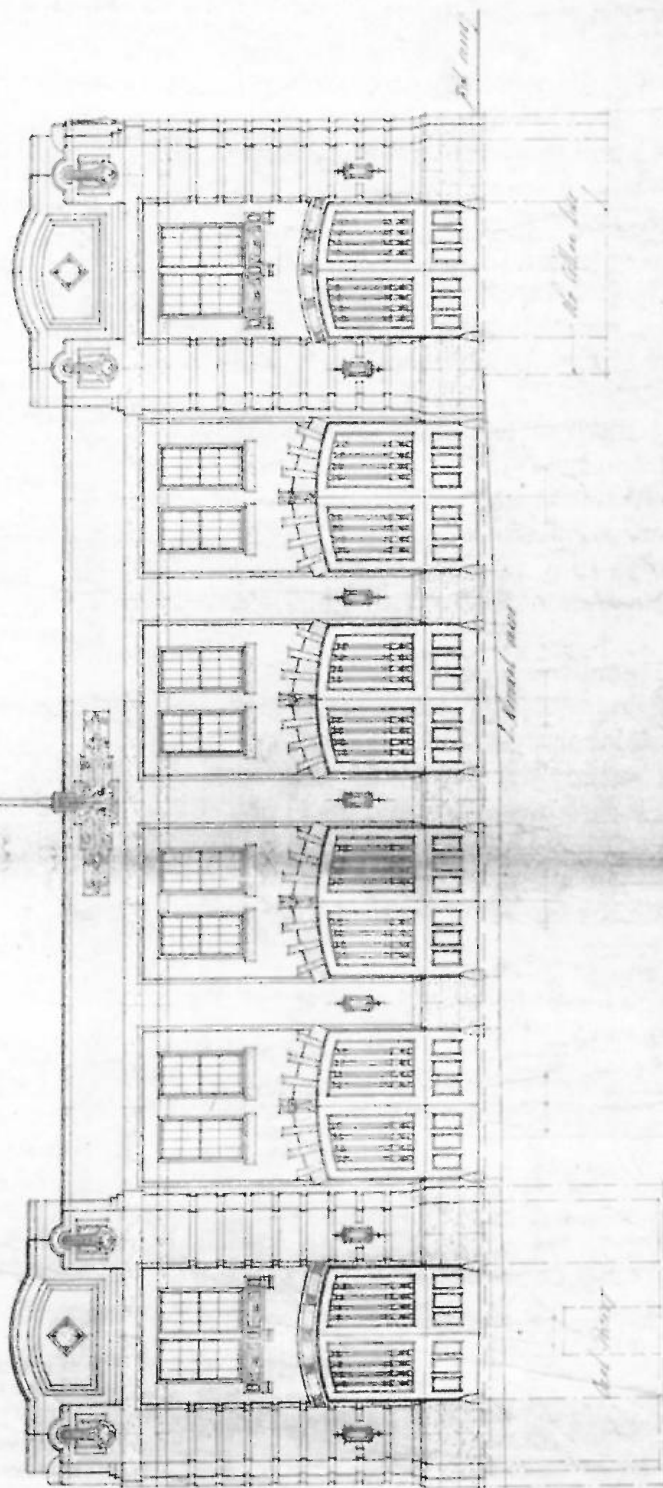


Figure 3. Maine Supply Company Building, Lewiston, 1988 view by Richard W. Cheek.



Figure 4. Lincoln School, South Portland, 1988 view (MHPC).

CENTRAL FIRE STATION
 PORTLAND MAINE
 FOR THE
 CITY OF PORTLAND



See plan opposite page 100

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

MILLER AND MAYO ARCHITECTS
 100 N. BROAD ST. PORTLAND, ME.

CONGRESS STREET ELEVATION

1

Figure 5. Front Elevation, Central Fire Station, Portland, by Miller & Mayo (Courtesy Maine Historical Society).

comfortable with such a traditional design, but the same can certainly be said about the senior partner, William R. Miller.⁶

During the early 1920s Miller and Mayo obtained several large and diverse commissions. These included the Melcher Apartments in Waterville of about 1920, the Lewiston Memorial Armory of 1922, the United Baptist Church in Lewiston of 1922, the Cyr Block in Waterville of 1923, and the South Portland High School of 1923-24. In 1923 they were chosen by the City of Portland to design the Central Fire Station (Figure 5). Constructed of yellow brick with cast stone trim, this building became an important part of a concentration of public buildings consisting of the City Hall, the County Courthouse, and the Federal Courthouse. Regrettably, the fire station did not match the others in granite construction. It is, nonetheless, an important public landmark distinguished by its deeply recessed bays and cast stone ornament in high relief. A year later, the architects were able to capitalize on the popularity of Egyptian motifs following the discovery of King Tut's Tomb in 1922. The Paquin Block in Biddeford of 1924 is a conventional commercial block embellished with cast stone Egyptian ornament.

Shortly after Raymond Mayo became a partner in 1906, Lester I. Beal (1887-1966) was hired as an apprentice draftsman. Like the two partners, Beal attended courses at M.I.T. in 1916-17. After service in World War I, he returned to Miller and Mayo and became a partner in 1926.⁷ That year the firm became Miller, Mayo and Beal. Although lasting only three years, this firm designed several major projects, such as the high schools in Scarborough and Norway of 1926, the Edwin Gould School at the Good Will Home in Hinckley of 1926-27, and the Marcotte Nursing Home in Lewiston of 1927-28.

Raymond J. Mayo withdrew from the firm in 1929, and on December 14th William R. Miller died. Mayo apparently continued to work independently, but, with the onset of the Great Depression, it is unlikely that he was very active. At least one project, the Northgate Apartments in Portland of 1929-30, has been identified as being his. In 1934 at the relatively young age of 56, he retired to North Yarmouth.⁸ Later Mayo moved to Massachusetts where his son Philip lived. He died there on February 13, 1966, a few months before Lester Beal.⁹ Beal had established the firm of Miller and Beal in 1929 and continued under that name after Miller's death. He continued to practice until 1960, acquiring several partners in later years. His grandson, Mark Wilcox, is now an architect in Portland.

Roger G. Reed

NOTES

- ¹ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, January 4, 1907. See, "William R. Miller", Vol. V, No. 14, for background information on the earlier firm.
- ² The two principal sources for the work of Miller and Mayo are the drawings in the Miller and Mayo Collection, Maine Historical Society, and the *Industrial Journal* (Bangor).
- ³ In 1909 Desmond also began a major remodeling of the Maine State House in Augusta.
- ⁴ The two successor firms, Desmond and Lord and Miller and Beal, collaborated on the State Office Building in Augusta designed in 1948, as well as a proposal for the State Library Building which would have replaced the west wing of the State House.
- ⁵ *Lewiston Evening Journal*, January 5, 1911.
- ⁶ A perspective view of the Nason Institute Building was published in the *Portland Sunday Telegram*, June 2, 1912. In later years it was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style.
- ⁷ The principal sources for background information on Beal are *Modern Maine*, pp. 337-338 and the *Portland Press Herald*, November 16, 1966. The item in *Modern Maine* states that he attended M.I.T. in 1922, and that the firm Miller, Mayo and Beal lasted from 1922-1926, which is incorrect. The M.I.T. Museum, Michael Yaetes, Assistant Curator, provided information on Beal's attendance record.
- ⁸ Mayo's retirement from Portland is documented in city and town directories. Mayo also worked on schools in Buxton and Camden during his brief independent practice.
- ⁹ Raymond J. Mayo obituary, *Lewiston Evening Journal*, February 14, 1966; Lester I. Beal obituary, *Portland Press Herald*, November 16, 1966.

LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS BY MILLER & MAYO

D. D. Coombs House, 74 Winter Street, Auburn, 1907, Extant
 St. Mary's College Building, Van Buren, 1907, Destroyed*
 A. E. Davis Block, Mexico, 1907, Destroyed
 Elks Clubhouse, Lewiston, 1907, Extant*
 Waterville Trust Company Bank, Main Street, Dexter, 1907, Extant (Clock Tower Added c. 1920)
 Abbott School, Mexico, 1907, Destroyed*
 Waterville Trust Company Bank, Newport, 1907, Unlocated
 Livermore Falls Trust Company Bank, 44 Main Street, Wilton, 1907, Altered
 C. E. Milliken House, Island Falls, 1907, Altered
 Turner Center Creamery, Benton, 1907, Unlocated*
 Pickard Block, Main Street, Auburn, 1907, Reconstruction, Extant
 F. H. Packard Cottage, Old Town Road, Harpswell, 1907, Altered*
 Whitney Cottage, Good Will Home, Hinckley, 1908-09, Altered
 Amos Gerald House, Main Street, Fairfield, 1909, Altered
 Kora Temple, Lewiston, 1909, Proposal, Not Executed
 City National Bank, 111 Main Street, Belfast, 1909, Extant
 Rangeley Tavern, Rangeley, 1909, Extant
 Mendelson Brothers Block, 242-248 Lisbon Street, Lewiston, 1909, Destroyed
 E. L. Bradford House, 28 Beacon Street, Auburn, c. 1909, Extant*
 Rumford Mechanics Association, 44-56 Congress Street, Rumford, 1910, Extant*
 Sherriff's Residence, Court Street, Auburn, 1910, Unlocated
 High School, Rumford, 1910, Not Executed
 High School, Richmond, 1910, Destroyed
 Benoit-Dunn Company Building, Biddeford, c. 1910, Alterations, Destroyed*
 F. C. Dudley House, 22 Deblois Street, Portland, c. 1910, Altered*
 York Village School, York, c. 1910, Not Executed*
 C. N. Blanchard House, Village View Street, Wilton, c. 1910, Extant*
 J. B. Lamontagne House, Lewiston, c. 1910, Unlocated*

Maine Supply and Garage Company Building, 379 Lisbon Street, Lewiston, 1910-11, Extant
 Roberts Hall, Colby College, Waterville, 1911, Destroyed*
 Dormitory, Maine Central Institute, Pittsfield, 1911, Extant*
 Berry Hall, New Hampton Institute, New Hampton, New Hampshire, 1911, Extant
 Dormitory, Castine Normal School, Castine, 1912, Extant
 Emery Department Store, 80-82 Main Street, Waterville, 1912, Altered*
 Union School, Summer Street, Biddeford, 1912, Altered*
 Nason Institute, Main Street, Springvale, 1912, Altered
 Lane Hall, New Hampton Institute, New Hampton, New Hampshire, 1912, Extant
 Besse High School, Albion, 1913, Altered
 Stateway Apartments, State and Danforth Streets, Portland, 1913-14, Extant*
 Purington Hall, Farmington State Normal School, Farmington, 1913-14, Extant*
 Eastern Blau Gas Company Building, 80 St. John Street, Portland, c. 1913, Extant*
 Dormitory, Gorham Normal School, Gorham, 1914, Extant*
 Marlborough Apartments, 180-188 High Street, Portland, c. 1914, Extant*
 Jordan Memorial Building, Ocean Park, Old Orchard, 1915, Extant
 Purington Block, Water Street, Augusta, 1915, Extant
 High and Grammar School, Dixfield, 1915, Destroyed*
 David A. Calhoun House, 13 Cottage Farms Road, Cape Elizabeth, c. 1915, Extant*
 Elm Street Theater, Portland, 1916, Destroyed*
 High School, Eastport, 1916-17, Destroyed
 Vilborn Pomerleau House, 13 Spring Street, Waterville, c. 1916, Destroyed*
 School, Gorham, New Hampshire, 1917, Not Executed*
 High School, Freeport, 1917-18, Destroyed*
 Municipal Building, Gorham, New Hampshire, 1917-19, Extant*
 Walter E. Reid Cottage, Georgetown, c. 1917, Extant*
 Charles A. Hill and Sons Cottage, Belgrade, c. 1917, Unlocated*
 Oxford County Registry of Deeds, Fryeburg, 1918, Extant*
 Portland High School, Cumberland Avenue, Portland, 1918 (with G. Henri Desmond, Architect), Extant*
 H. B. Estes House, 42 Hillcrest, Auburn, c. 1919, Extant*
 Charles H. Robinson House, Shore Road, Cape Elizabeth, c. 1919, Extant*
 Central Camp Building for Taylor Farms, Belgrade, 1920 (with G. Henri Desmond, Architect), Unlocated*
 Abe Goodside Building, Portland, 1920, Unlocated
 Cottage Farm School, Cottage Farm Road, Cape Elizabeth, 1920, Destroyed*
 Lafayette Hotel Annex, 355-357 Congress Street, Portland, 1920-21 (with G. Henri Desmond, Architect), Extant*

The Melcher Apartments, 77 Elm Street, Waterville, c. 1920, Extant*
 George M. Blake House, Portland, c. 1920, Not Executed*
 Spenard and Company Garage, Alfred Street, Biddeford, c. 1920, Extant*
 Mrs. James E. Mariner House, 12 Cottage Farm Road, Cape Elizabeth, c. 1920-25, Extant*
 Armory, Central Avenue, Lewiston, 1922, Altered*
 United Baptist Church, Main Street, Lewiston, 1922, Extant*
 T. F. Foss Block, Portland, 1922, Unlocated
 Gilson Auto Service Station, 355-357 Forest Avenue, Portland, c. 1922, Destroyed*
 High School, Ocean Street, South Portland, 1922-23, Extant
 Clark Memorial Methodist Church, Pleasant Avenue, Portland, 1923, Alterations, Extant*
 Cyr Block, Main Street, Waterville, 1923, Extant*
 Central Fire Station, Congress Street, Portland, 1923-24, Extant*
 Potter Furniture Company, 24-26 Preble Street, Portland, c. 1923, Alterations, Altered
 J. K. Paquin Block, Washington Street, Biddeford, 1924, Altered*
 Thornton Heights School, Westbrook Avenue, South Portland, 1924-25, Addition, Extant*
 Town Building, Ocean Avenue, Cape Elizabeth, 1924-25, Alterations, Extant*
 M. W. Pines House, 118 Bedford Street, Portland, c. 1924, Extant*
 Thomas B. Reed School, Homestead Avenue, Portland, 1925, Extant*
 Lincoln School, Broadway, South Portland, 1925-26, Extant*
 Woodfords Congregational Church Parish House, Portland, 1925-26, Extant*
 Margaret Blanchard House, Auburn, n.d., Probably Not Executed*
 Peoples National Bank, 110 Main Street, Waterville, n.d., Alterations, Destroyed*
 Shoe Factory, Springvale, n.d., Unlocated*
 Virginia School, Addition, Rumford Falls, n.d., Destroyed*
 Double House for Misses Waite, North Berwick, n.d., Probably Not Executed*
 Walter Wyman House, Western Avenue, Augusta, n.d., Alterations, Destroyed*

*Architectural drawings at the Maine Historical Society, Portland

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

Maine Historical Society maintains a collection of drawings by Miller & Mayo and successor firms. These consist primarily of working drawings on linen. When drawings exist they are noted with asterisks in the list of commissions.

Photographs of Miller and Mayo
 Courtesy of Maine Historical Society

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